



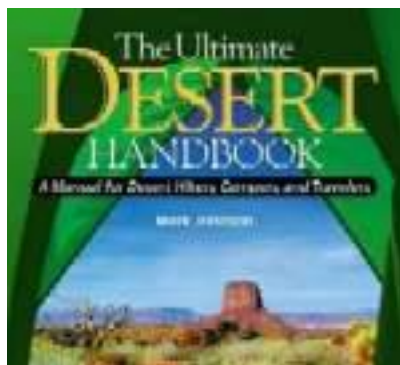
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The Ultimate Desert Handbook

James

- Skills and guides - Library -



Publication: Monday 18 August 2003

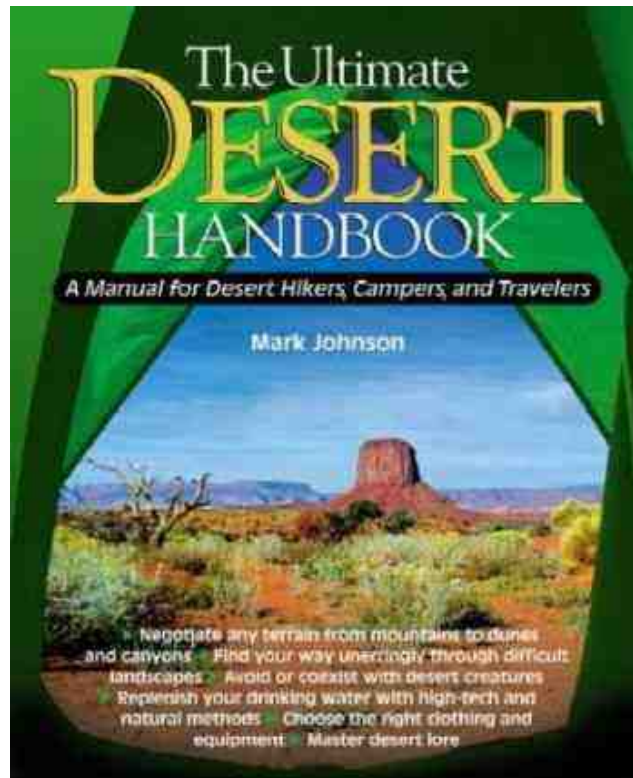
Update: 21 July 2003

Description :

An extensive and complete book for desert lovers and people that plan to travel through a desertic area.

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THE ULTIMATE DESERT HANDBOOK 296 pages - Fully Illustrated - Ragged Mountain Press ISBN: 007139303X

Book Description (sent by the author)

The Ultimate Desert Handbook is the first truly comprehensive handbook on desert travel and exploration, presenting the desert not as an alien environment to be overcome or endured, but rather as a fascinating opportunity for anyone eager to learn about and enjoy a different kind of outdoors experience. Assuming no prior desert knowledge, this detailed guide is intended for hikers, backpackers, campers, survival enthusiasts, and 4WD vehicle travelers, along with other adventure enthusiasts pursuing their chosen activities into the desert. Even dayhikers and occasional visitors to desert destinations will find the book easy to understand and extremely useful. The Ultimate Desert Handbook is packed with information and includes descriptions and histories of deserts around the world, a complete survey of the North American deserts, their indigenous peoples, plants, and wildlife; expert advice, including historical background and the latest technical developments in desert hiking, backpacking, camping, equipment, footwear, and clothing. Desert survival, including such topics as finding and treating water from all manner of sources, snakes and snakebite, navigation, and rescue signaling is thoroughly presented, with information on techniques that work - and those that could kill you. Also included are chapters on desert mountain biking, first aid, wildlife observation & photography (including tips on film cameras, digicams, and night optics), all manner of desert hazards, as well as preparing and using desert vehicles and animal transport. Last but not least is the most thorough section on desert navigation ever published - from using the stars to map, compass, sextant, and the Global Positioning System - and easy-to-follow advice on everything from selecting a low-impact campsite to signaling and rescue communications.

Review

I found this book very interesting on many aspects, and I think it covers much more than simple desert topics.

The general presentation choice of chapters makes it an easy reading, and enables good cross references.

Here are the points I liked a lot:

History

I loved reading a bit of history on each desert. The US deserts are a bit better documented than the other and have their specific chapter.

Navigation

The navigation section is absolutely excellent. It covers what is needed in a desertic environment, but of course the principles are always the same, so the coverage extends largely to other land environments (you will only be missing the notion of drift used for sea and air navigation). A good idea was to include GPS navigation with the classical compass / map and even sextant navigation.

Gear

There are good indication of the current gear available, and good tips on what works and what does not.

Water

A no bullshit discussion about water, and estimates of individual water consumption in a desertic environment. Again, what works and what does not work, based on direct experience.

Survival and first aid

A nice thing is that this book really focusses of helping people not to need this kind of information. But of course it is there.

The down side is a certain focus toward US deserts, and US gear, but it does not change the fact that there is a lot of good information.

Conclusion

I am not a desert hiker as such, but I do hike and mountain bike in 35 deg C weather, and I found this book contains excellent information. It is very extensive, and covers the subject totally.

More than a book written about deserts by an expert, or a military person, this is a book written on deserts by someone that loves and knows them. This is a strong difference, it may turn contagious, it did give me the envy to

experience it anyway. It is not only about survival, though the subject obviously is covered. But more important, all the information in this book comes from direct first hand experience, and is not theoretical.

Among similar books I have read, it is the first one to provide a navigation section whose information works and can really be used. It does put the emphasis on getting accurate local information, a point so often missed!

Reading a book does not make you an expert of anything, but I would say that this one at least communicates practical experience a bit better than the others.

This book will certainly prove useful for people doing car raids and excursions in desertic environments, northern Africa included.

Post-scriptum :more on www.ultimatedeserthandbook.com